

Letter of Gerrit Smith, to Hon. Henry Clay.

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NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, NO. 143 NASSAU STREET.

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LETTER.

Peterboro, March 21, 1839.

Hon. Henry Clay:

Dear Sir,

In the Annual Meeting of the American Colonization Society, held in the Capitol in the city of Washington, December, 1835, you commented on a speech made by myself, the previous autumn. Your objections to that speech formed the principal subject matter of your remarks. Does not this fact somewhat mitigate the great presumption of which I feel myself guilty, in undertaking, all unhonored and humble as I am, to review the production of one of the most distinguished statesmen of the age?

Until the appearance of your celebrated speech on the subject of slavery, I had supposed that you cherished a sacred regard for the right of petition. I now find, that you value it no more highly than they do, who make open war upon it. Indeed, you admit, that, in relation to this right, "there is no substantial difference between" them and yourself. Instead of rebuking, you compliment them; and, in saying that "the majority of the Senate" would not "violate the right of petition in any case, in which, according to its judgment, the object of the petition could be safely or properly granted," you show to what destructive conditions you subject this absolute right. Your doctrine is, that in those cases, where the object of the petition is such, as the supplicated party can approve, previously to any discussion of its merits—there, and there only, exists the right of petition. For aught I see, you

are no more to be regarded as the friend of this right, than is the conspicuous gentleman^{*} who framed the Report on that subject, which was presented to the Senate of my state the last month. That

* Colonel Young.

A gentleman admits the sacredness of "the right to petition on any subject;" and yet, in the same breath, he insists on the equal sacredness of the right to refuse to attend to a petition. He manifestly failed to bear in mind, that a right to petition implies the correlative right to be heard. How different are the statesmen, who insist "on the right to refuse to attend to a petition," from Him, who says, "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard." And who are poor, if it be not those for whom the abolitionists cry? They must even cry by proxy. For, in the language of John Quincy Adams, the champion of the right of petition, "The slave is not permitted to cry for mercy—to plead for pardon—to utter the shriek of perishing nature for relief." It may be well to remark, that the error, which I have pointed out in the Report in question, lies in the premises of the principal argument of that paper; and that the correction of this error is necessarily attended with the destruction of the premises, and with the overthrow of the argument, which is built upon them.

I surely need not stop to vindicate the right of petition. It is a natural right—one that human laws can guarantee, but can neither create nor destroy. It is an interesting fact, that the Amendment to the Federal Constitution, which guarantees the right of petition, was opposed in the Congress of 1789 as superfluous. It was argued, that this is "a self-evident, inalienable right, which the people possess," and that "it would never be called in question." What a change in fifty years!

You deny the power of Congress to abolish the inter-state traffic in human beings; and, inasmuch as you say, that the right "to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states," does not include the right to prohibit and destroy commerce; and, inasmuch as it is understood, that it was in virtue of the right to regulate commerce, that Congress enacted laws to restrain our participation in the "African slave trade," you perhaps also deny, that Congress had the power to enact such laws. The history of the times in which the Federal Constitution was framed and adopted, justifies the belief, that the clause of that instrument under consideration conveys the power, which Congress exercised. For instance, Governor Randolph, when speaking in the Virginia Convention of 1788, of the clause which declares, that "the migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by Congress prior to the year 1808," said, "This is an exception from the power of regulating commerce, and the restriction is to continue only till 1808. Then Congress can, by the exercise of that power, prevent future importations."

Were I, however, to admit that the right “to regulate commerce,” does not include the right to prohibit and destroy commerce, it nevertheless would not follow, that Congress might not prohibit or destroy certain branches of commerce. It might need to do so, in order to preserve our general commerce with a state or nation. So large a proportion of the cloths of Turkey might be fraught with the contagion of the plague, as to make it necessary for our Government to forbid the importation of all cloths from that country, and thus totally destroy one branch of our commerce with it, to the end that the other branches might be preserved. No inconsiderable evidence that Congress has the right to prohibit or destroy a branch of commerce, is to be found in the fact, that it has done so. From March, 1794, to May, 1820, it enacted several laws, which went to prohibit or destroy, and, in the end, did prohibit or destroy the trade of this country with Africa in human beings. And, if Congress has the power to pass embargo laws, has it not the power to prohibit or destroy commerce altogether?

It is, however, wholly immaterial, whether Congress could prohibit our participation in the “African slave trade,” in virtue of the clause which empowers it “to regulate commerce.” That the Constitution does, in some one or more of its passages, convey the power, is manifest from the testimony of the Constitution itself. The first clause of the ninth section says: “The migration or importation of such persons, as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress prior to the year 1808.” Now the implication in this clause of the existence of the power in question, is as conclusive, as would be the express and positive grant of it. You will observe, too, that the power of Congress over “migration or importation,” which this clause implies, is a power not merely to “regulate,” as you define the word, but to “prohibit.”

It is clear, then, that Congress had the power to interdict our trade in human beings with Africa. But, in view of what has been said on that point—in view of the language of the Federal Constitution—of the proceedings of the Convention, which framed it—and of the cotemporary public sentiment—is it any less clear, that Congress has the power to interdict the inter-state traffic in human beings?

There are some, who assert that the words “migration” and “importation,” instead of referring, as I maintain they do—the former to the removal of slaves from state to state, and the latter to their introduction from Africa—are used in the Constitution as synonyms, and refer exclusively to the “African slave trade.” But there is surely no ground for the imputation of such utter tautology, if we recollect that the Constitution was written by scholars, and that remarkable pains were taken to clear it of all superfluous words—a Committee having been appointed for that special purpose. But, it may be asked, Why, in reference to the taking of slaves from one state to another, use the word “migration,” which denotes voluntary removal? One answer is—that it can be used with as much propriety in that case, as in the removal of slaves from Africa—the removal in the one case being no less involuntary than in the other. Another answer is—that the framers of the Constitution selected

the word "migration," because of its congruity with that of "persons," under which their virtuous shame sought to conceal from posterity the existence of seven hundred thousand slaves amongst a people, who had but recently entered upon their national career, with the solemn declaration, that "all men are created equal."

John Jay, whose great celebrity is partly owing to his very able expositions of the Constitution, says: "To me, the constitutional authority of the Congress to prohibit the migration *and* importation of slaves into any of the states, does not appear questionable." If the disjunctive between "migration" and "importation" in the Constitution, argues their reference to the same thing, Mr. Jay's copulative argues more strongly, that, in his judgment, they refer to different things.

The law of Congress constituting the "Territory of Orleans," was enacted in 1804. It fully recognizes the power of that body to prohibit the trade in slaves between a territory and the states. But, if Congress had this power, why had it not as clear a power to prohibit, at that time, the trade in slaves between any two of the states? It might have prohibited it, but for the constitutional suspension of the exercise of the power. The term of that suspension closed, however, in 1808; and, since that year, Congress has had as full power to abolish the whole slave trade between the states, as it had in 1804 to abolish the like trade between the Territory of Orleans and the states.

But, notwithstanding the conclusive evidence, that the Constitution empowers Congress to abolish the inter-state slave trade, it is incomprehensible to many, that such states as Virginia and Maryland should have consented to deprive themselves of the benefit of selling their slaves into other states. It is incomprehensible, only because they look upon such states in the light of their present character and present interests. It will no longer be so, if they will bear in mind, that slave labor was then, as it is now, unprofitable for ordinary agriculture, and that Whitney's cotton-gin, which gave great value to such labor was not yet invented, and that the purchase of Louisiana, which has had so great an effect to extend and perpetuate the dominion of slavery, was not yet made. It will no longer be incomprehensible to them, if they will recollect, that, at the period in question, American slavery was regarded as a rapidly decaying, if not already expiring institution. It will no longer be so, if they will recollect, how small was the price of slaves then, compared with their present value; and that, during the ten years, which followed the passage of the Act of Virginia in 1782, legalizing manumissions, her citizens emancipated slaves to the number of nearly one-twentieth of the whole amount of her slaves in that year. To learn whether your native Virginia clung in the year 1787 to the inter-state traffic in human flesh, we must take our post of observation, not amongst her degenerate sons, who, in 1836, sold men, women, and children, to the amount of twenty-four millions of dollars—not amongst her President Dews, who write books in favor of breeding human stock for exportation—

but amongst her Washingtons, and Jeffersons, and Henrys, and Masons, who, at the period when the Constitution was framed, freely expressed their abhorrence of slavery.

But, however confident you may be, that Congress has not the lawful power to abolish the branch of commerce in question; nevertheless, would the abolition of it be so clearly and grossly unconstitutional, as to justify the contempt with which the numerous petitions for the measure are treated, and the impeachment of their fidelity to the Constitution, and of their patriotism and purity, which the petitioners are made to endure?

I was about to take it for granted, that, although you deny the power of Congress to abolish the inter-state traffic in human beings, you do not justify the traffic—when I recollected the intimation in your speech, that there is no such traffic. For, when you speak of “the slave trade between the states,” and add—“or, as it is described in abolition petitions, the traffic in human beings between the states”—do you not intimate there is no such traffic? Whence this language? Do you not believe slaves are human beings? And do you not believe that they suffer under the disruption of the dearest earthly ties, as human beings suffer? I will not detain you to hear what we of the North think of this internal slave trade. But I will call your attention to what is thought of it in your own Kentucky and in your native Virginia. Says the “Address 8 of the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky to the Churches in 1835:”—“Brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives, are torn asunder, and permitted to see each other no more. Those acts are daily occurring in the midst of us. The shrieks and the agony often witnessed on such occasions, proclaim with a trumpet tongue the iniquity and cruelty of the system. There is not a neighborhood where these heart-rending scenes are not displayed. There is not a village or road that does not behold the sad procession of manacled outcasts, whose chains and mournful countenances tell that they are exiled by force from all that their hearts hold dear.” Says Thomas Jefferson Randolph, in the Virginia Legislature in 1832, when speaking of this trade: “It is a practice, and an increasing practice, in parts of Virginia, to rear slaves for market. How can an honourable mind, a patriot, and a lover of his country, bear to see this ancient dominion, rendered illustrious by the noble devotion and patriotism of her sons in the cause of liberty, converted into one grand menagerie, where men are to be reared for the market like oxen for the shambles. Is it better—is it not worse than the (foreign) slave trade—that trade which enlisted the labor of the good and wise of every creed and every clime to abolish? The (foreign) trader receives the slave, a stranger in language, aspect, and manner, from the merchant who has brought him from the interior. The ties of father, mother, husband, and child, have already been rent in twain; before he receives him, his soul has become callous. But here, sir, individuals whom the master has known from infancy, whom he has seen sporting in the innocent gambols of childhood—who have been accustomed to look to him for protection, he tears from the mother's arms, and sells into a strange country—among strange people, subject to cruel taskmasters.”

You are in favor of increasing the number of slave states. The terms of the celebrated “Missouri compromise” warrant, in your judgment, the increase. But, notwithstanding you admit, that this unholy compromise, in which tranquillity was purchased at the expense of humanity and righteousness, does not “in terms embrace the case,” and “is not absolutely binding and obligatory;” you, nevertheless, make no attempt whatever to do away any one of the conclusive objections, which are urged against such increase. You do not attempt to show how the multiplication of slave states can consist with the constitutional duty of the “United States to guarantee to every state in the Union a republican form of government,” any more than if it were perfectly clear, that a government is republican under which one half of the 9 people are lawfully engaged in buying and selling the other half; or than if the doctrine that “all men are created equal” were not the fundamental and distinctive doctrine of a republican government. You no more vindicate the proposition to enlarge the realm of slavery, than if the proposition were as obviously in harmony with, as it is opposed to the anti-slavery tenor and policy of the Constitution—the rights of man—and the laws of God.

You are perhaps of the number of those, who, believing, that a state can change its Constitution as it pleases, deem it futile in Congress to require, that States, on entering the Union, shall have anti-slavery Constitutions. The Framers of the Federal Constitution doubtless foresaw the possibility of treachery, on the part of the new States, in the matter of slavery: and the restriction in that instrument to the old States—“the States now existing”—of the right to participate in the internal and “African slave trade” may be ascribed to the motive of diminishing, if not indeed of entirely preventing, temptation to such treachery. The Ordinance concerning the North-west Territory, passed by the Congress of 1787, and ratified by the Congress of 1790, shows, so far as those bodies can be regarded as correct interpreters of the Constitution which was framed in 1787, and adopted in 1789, that slavery was not to have a constitutional existence in the new States. The Ordinance confines the privilege of recapturing fugitive slaves in the North-west Territory to the “existing States.” Slaves in that territory, to be the subjects of lawful recapture, must in the language of the Ordinance, owe “labour or service in one of the *original* States.”

I close what I have to say on this topic, with the remark, that were it admitted, that the reasons for the increase of the number of slave States are sound and satisfactory, it nevertheless would not follow, that the moral and constitutional wrong of preventing that increase is so palpable, as to justify the scorn and insult, which are heaped by Congress upon this hundred thousand petitioners for this measure.

It has hitherto been supposed, that you distinctly and fully admitted the Constitutional power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. But, on this point, as on that of the right of petition, you have for reasons known to yourself, suddenly and greatly changed your tone. Whilst

your speech argues, at no small length, that Congress has not the right to abolish slavery in the District, all that it says in favor of the Constitutional power to abolish it, is that "the language (of the Constitution) may *possibly* be sufficiently comprehensive to include a power of abolition." "Faint praise dams;" 2 10 and your very reluctant and qualified concession of the Constitutional power under consideration, is to be construed, rather as a denial than a concession.

Until I acquire the skill of making white whiter, and black blacker, I shall have nothing to say in proof of the Constitutional power of Congress over slavery in the District of Columbia, beyond referring to the terms, in which the Constitution so plainly conveys this power. That instrument authorises Congress "to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over such District." If these words do not confer the power, it is manifest that no words could confer it. I will add that, never, until the last few years, had doubts been expressed, that these words do fully confer that power.

You will, perhaps, say, that Virginia and Maryland made their cessions of the territory, which constitutes the District of Columbia, with reservations on the subject of slavery. We answer, that none were expressed; * and that if there had been, Congress would not, and in view of the language of the Constitution, could not, have accepted the cessions. You may then say, that they would not have ceded the territory, had it occurred to them, that Congress would have cleared it of slavery; and that, this being the fact, Congress could not thus clear it, without being guilty of bad faith, and of an ungenerous and unjustifiable surprise on those States. There are several reasons for believing, that those States, not only did not, at the period in question, cherish dread of the abolition of slavery; but that the public sentiment within them was decidedly in favor of its speedy abolition. At that period, their most distinguished statesmen were trumpet-tongued against slavery. At that period, there was both a Virginia and a Maryland society

* There is a proviso in the Act of Virginia. It was on this, that three years ago, in the Senate of the United States, Benjamin Watkins Leigh built his argument against the constitutional power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. I well remember that you then denied the soundness of his argument. This superfluous proviso virtually forbids Congress to pass laws, which shall "affect the rights of individuals" in the ceded territory. Amongst the inviolable "rights" was that of holding slaves, as Mr. Leigh contended. I regret, that, in replying to him, you did not make use of the fact, that all the members of Congress from Virginia voted in favor of the Ordinance, which abolished slavery an the North-West Territory; and this too, notwithstanding, that, in the Act of 1784, by which she ceded the North-West Territory to the Territory to the Confederacy, she provided, that the "citizens of Virginia" in the said Territory, many of whom held slaves, should "be protected in the enjoyment of their rights." This fact furnishes striking evidence that at, or about, the time of the cession by Virginia of her portion of the District of Colombia, her statesmen believed, that the right

to hold slaves in those portions of our country under the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, was not beyond the reach of the controlling power of Congress.

11 “for promoting the abolition of slavery;” and, it was then, that, with the entire consent of Virginia and Maryland, effectual measures were adopted to preclude slavery from that large territory, which has since given Ohio and several other States to the Union. On this subject, as on that of the interstate slave trade, we misinterpret Virginia and Maryland, by not considering, how unlike was their temper in relation to slavery, amidst the decays and dying throes of that institution half a century ago, to what it is now, when slavery is not only revived, but has become the predominant interest and giant power of the nation. We forget, that our whole country was, at that time, smitten with love for the holy cause of impartial and universal liberty. To judge correctly of the view, which our Revolutionary fathers took of oppression, we must go back and stand by their side, in their struggles against it,—we must survey them through the medium of the antislavery sentiment of their own times, and not impute to them the pro-slavery spirit so rampant in ours.

I will, however, suppose it true, that Virginia and Maryland would not have made the cessions in question, had they foreseen, that Congress would abolish slavery in the District of Columbia:—and yet, I affirm, that it would be the duty of Congress to abolish it. Had there been State Prisons in the territory, at the time Congress acquired jurisdiction over it, and had Congress immediately opened their doors, and turned loose hundreds of depraved and bloody criminals, there would indeed have been abundant occasion for complaint. But, had the exercise of its power in the premises extended no farther than to the liberation of such convicts, as, on a re-examination of their cases, were found to be clearly guiltless of the crimes charged upon them, the sternest justice could not have objected to such an occasion for the rejoicing of mercy. And are not the thousands in the District, for whose liberation Congress is besought, unjustly deprived of their liberty? Not only are they guiltless, but they are even unaccused of such crimes, as in the judgment of any, justly work a forfeiture of liberty. And what do Virginia and Maryland ask? Is it, that Congress shall resubject to their control those thousands of deeply wronged men? No—for this Congress cannot do. They ask, that Congress shall fulfil the tyrant wishes of these States. They ask, that the whole people of the United States—those who hate, as well as those who love slavery, shall, by their representatives, assume the guilty and awful responsibility of perpetuating the enslavement of their innocent fellow men: —of chaining the bodies and crushing the wills, and blotting out the minds of such, as have neither transgressed, nor even been accused of having transgressed, a single human law. And the crime, which 12 Virginia and Maryland, and they, who sympathise with them, would have the nation perpetrate, is, not simply that of prolonging the captivity of those, who were slaves before the cession—for but a handful of them are now remaining in the District. Most of the present number became slaves under the

authority of this guilty nation. Their wrongs originated with Congress: and Congress is asked, not only to perpetuate their oppression, but to fasten the yoke of slavery on generations yet unborn.

There are those, who advocate the recession of the District of Columbia. If the nation were to consent to this, without having previously exercised her power to “break every yoke” of slavery in the District, the blood of those so cruelly left there in “the house of bondage,” would remain indelible and damning upon her skirts:—and this too, whether Virginia and Maryland did or did not intend to vest Congress with any power over slavery. It is enough, that the nation has the power “to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain,” to make her fearfully guilty before God, if she “forbear” to exercise it.

Suppose, I were to obtain a lease of my neighbor's barn for the single and express purpose of securing my crops; and that I should find, chained up in one of its dark corners, an innocent fellow man, whom that neighbor was subjecting to the process of a lingering death; ought I to pause and recall President Wayland's, “Limitations of Human Responsibility,” and finally let the poor sufferer remain in his chains; or ought I not rather, promptly to respond to the laws of my nature and my nature's God, and let him go free? But, to make this case analogous to that we have been considering—to that, which imposes its claims on Congress—we must strike out entirely the condition of the lease, and with it all possible doubts of my right to release the victim of my neighbor's murderous hate.

I am entirely willing to yield, for the sake of argument, that Virginia and Maryland, when ceding the territory which constitutes the District of Columbia, did not anticipate, and did not choose the abolition of slavery in it. To make the admission stronger, I will allow, that these States were, at the time of the cession, as warmly opposed to the abolition of slavery in the District as they are said to be now: and to make it stronger still, I will allow, that the abolition of slavery in the District would prove deeply injurious, not only to Virginia and Maryland but to the nation at large. And, after all these admissions, I must still insist, that Congress is under perfectly plain moral obligation to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.

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They, who are deterred from favoring the abolition of slavery in the District by the apprehension, that Virginia and Maryland, if not, indeed, the nation at large, might suffer injurious consequences from the measure, overlook the fact that there is a third party in the case. It is common to regard the nation as constituting one of the parties—Virginia and Maryland another, and the only other. But in point of fact, there is a third party. Of what does it consist? Of horses, oxen, and other brutes? Then we need not be greatly concerned about it—since its rights in that case, would be obviously subordinate to those of the other parties. Again, if such be the composition of this third party, we

are not to be greatly troubled, that President Wayland and thousands of others entirely overlook its rights and interests; though they ought to be somewhat mindful even of brutes. But, this third party is composed, not of brutes—but of men—of the seven thousand men in the District, who have fallen under the iron hoofs of slavery—and who, because they are men, have rights equal to, and as sacred as the rights of any other men—rights, moreover, which cannot be innocently encroached on, even to the breadth of one hair, whether under the plea of “state necessity”—of the perils of emancipation—or under any other plea, which conscience-smitten and cowardly tyranny can suggest.

If these lines shall ever be so favored, as to fall under the eye of the venerable and beloved John Quincy Adams, I beg, that, when he shall have read them, he will solemnly inquire of his heart, whether, if he should ever be left to vote against the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and thus stab deeply the cause of civil liberty, of humanity, and of God; the guilty act would not result from overlooking the rights and interests, and even the existence itself, of a third party in the case—and from considering the claims of the nation and those of Virginia and Maryland, as the only claims on which he was called to pass, because they were the claims of the only parties, of which he was aware.

You admit that “the first duty of Congress in relation to the District of Columbia, is to render it available, comfortable, and convenient as a seat of government of the whole Union.” I thank you for an admission, which can be used, with great effect, against the many, who maintain, that Congress is as much bound to consult the interests and wishes of the inhabitants of the District, and be governed by them, as a State Legislature is to study and serve the interests and wishes of its constituents. The inhabitants of the District have taken up their residence in it, aware, that the paramount object of Congressional legislation is not their, but the nation's advantage. They judge, that their disfranchisement and the other disadvantages attending their residence are more than balanced by their favorable position for partial. paring in Governmental patronage and other benefits. They know, that they have no better right to complain, that the legislation of Congress is not dictated by a primary regard to their interests, than has the Colonization Society, of which you are President, to complain, that the Capitol, in which it holds its annual meetings, is not constructed and fitted up in the best possible manner for such occasions. They know, that to sacrifice the design and main object of that building to its occasional and incidental uses, would be an absurdity no greater than would Congress be guilty of in shaping its legislation to the views of the thirty thousand white inhabitants of the District of Columbia, at the expense of neglecting the will and interests of the nation.

You feel, that there is no hazard in your admission, that the paramount object in relation to the District of Columbia, is its suitability for a seat of Government, since you accompany that admission with the denial, that the presence of slavery interferes with such suitability. But is it not a matter of deep regret, that the place, in which our national laws are made—that the place from which the sentiment and fashion of the whole country derive so much of their tone and direction—should cherish a system, which you have often admitted, is at war with the first principles of our religion and civil polity; * and the influences of which are no less pervading and controlling than corrupting? Is it not a matter of deep regret, that they, whom other governments send to our own, and to whom, on account of their superior intellect and influence, it is our desire, as it is our duty, to commend our free institutions, should be obliged to learn their lessons of practical republicanism amidst the monuments and abominations of slavery? Is it no objection to the District of Columbia, as the seat of our Government, that slavery, which concerns the political and moral interests of the nation, more than any other subject coming within the range of legislation, is not allowed to be discussed there—either within or without the Halls of Congress? It is one of the doctrines of slavery, that slavery shall not be discussed. Some of its advocates are frank enough to avow, as the reason for this prohibition, that slavery cannot bear to be discussed. In your speech before the American Colonization Society in 1835, to which I have referred, you distinctly take the ground, that slavery is a subject not

* "It (slavery) is a sin and a curse both to the master and the slave."— *Henry Clay*.

15 open to general discussion. Very far am I from believing, that you would employ, or intentionally countenance violence, to prevent such discussion. Nevertheless, it is to this doctrine of non-discussion, which you and others put forth, that the North is indebted for her proslavery mobs, and the South for her pro-slavery Lynchings. The declarations of such men as Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun, that slavery is a question not to be discussed, are a license to mobs to burn up halls and break up abolition meetings, and destroy abolition presses, and murder abolition editors. Had such men held the opposite doctrine, and admitted, yea, and insisted, as it was their duty to do, that every question in morals and politics is a legitimate subject of free discussion—the District of Columbia would be far less objectionable, as the seat of our Government. In that case the lamented Dr. Crandall would not have been seized in the city of Washington on the suspicion of being an abolitionist, and thrown into prison, and subjected to distresses of mind and body, which resulted in his premature death. Had there been no slavery in the District, this outrage would not have been committed; and the murders, chargeable on the bloodiest of all bloody institutions, would have been one less than they now are. Talk of the slaveholding District of Columbia being a suitable locality for the seat of our Government! Why, Sir, a distinguished member of Congress was threatened there with an indictment for the *crime* of presenting, or rather of proposing to present,

a petition to the body with which he was connected! Indeed the occasion of the speech, on which I am now commenting, was the *impudent* protest of inhabitants of that District against the right of the American people to petition their own Congress, in relation to matters of vital importance to the seat of their own Government! I take occasion here to admit, that I have seen but references to this protest—not the protest itself. I presume, that it is not dissimilar, in its spirit, to the petition presented about the same time by Mr. Moore in the other House of Congress—his speech on which, he complains was ungenerously anticipated by yours on the petition presented by yourself. As the petition presented by Mr. Moore is short, I will copy it, that I may say to you with the more effect—how unfit is the spirit of a slaveholding people, as illustrated in this petition, to be the spirit of the people at the seat of a free Government!

“ To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

The petition of the undersigned, citizens of the District of Columbia represents—That they have witnessed with deep regret the attempts 16 which are making *to disturb the integrity* of the Union by a BAND OF FANATICS, embracing men, women, and children, who cease not day and night to crowd the tables of your halls with SEDITIOUS MEMORIALS—and solicit your honorable bodies that you will, in your wisdom, henceforth give neither support nor countenance to such UNHALLOWED ATTEMPTS, but that you will, in the most emphatic manner, set the seal of your disapprobation upon all such FOUL AND UNNATURAL EFFORTS, by refusing not only to READ and REFER, but also to RECEIVE any papers which either directly or indirectly, or by implication, aim at any interference with the rights of your petitioners, or of those of any citizen of any of the States or Territories of the United States, or of this District of which we are inhabitants.”

A Legislature should be imbued with a free, independent, fearless spirit. But it cannot be, where discussion is overawed and interdicted, or its boundaries at all contracted. Wherever slavery reigns, the freedom of discussion is not tolerated: and wherever slavery exists, there slavery reigns;—reigns too with that exclusive spirit of Turkish despotism, that, “bears no brother near the throne.”

You agree with President Wayland, that it is as improper for Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, as to create it in some place in the free States, over which it has jurisdiction. As improper, in the judgment of an eminent statesman, and of a no less eminent divine, to destroy what they both admit to be a system of unrighteousness, as to establish it! As improper to restrain as to practice, a violation of God's law! What will other countries and coming ages think of the politics of our statesmen and the ethics of our divines?

But, besides its immorality, Congress has no Constitutional right to create slavery. You have not yet presumed to deny positively, that Congress has the right to abolish slavery in the District of

Columbia; and, notwithstanding the intimation in your speech, you will not presume to affirm, that Congress has the Constitutional right to enact laws reducing to, or holding in slavery, the inhabitants of West Point, or any other locality in the free States, over which it has exclusive jurisdiction. I would here remark, that the law of Congress, which revived the operation of the laws of Virginia and Maryland in the District of Columbia, being, so far as it respects the slave laws of those States, a violation of the Federal Constitution, should be held of no avail towards legalizing slavery in the District—and the subjects of that slavery, should, consequently, be declared by our Courts unconditionally free.

You will admit that slavery is a system of surpassing injustice:— 17 but an avowed object of the Constitution is to “establish justice.” You will admit that it utterly annihilates the liberty of its victims:—but another of the avowed objects of the Constitution is to “secure the blessings of liberty.” You will admit, that slavery does, and necessarily must, regard its victims as *chattels*. The Constitution, on the contrary, speaks of them as nothing short of *persons*. Roger Sherman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a framer of the Federal Constitution, and a member of the first Congress under it, denied that this instrument considers slaves “as a species of property.” Mr. Madison, in the 54th No. of the Federalist admits, that the Constitution “regards them as inhabitants.” Many cases might be cited, in which Congress has, in consonance with the Constitution, refused to recognize slaves as property. It was the expectation, as well as the desire of the framers of the Constitution, that slavery should soon cease to exist in our country; and, but for the laws, which both Congress and the slave States, have, in flagrant violation of the letter and spirit and obvious policy of the Constitution, enacted in behalf of slavery, that vice would, ere this, have disappeared from our land. Look, for instance, at the laws enacted in the face of the clause: “The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States”—laws too, which the States that enacted them, will not consent to repeal, until they consent to abandon slavery. It is by these laws, that they shut out the colored people of the North, the presence of a single individual of whom so alarms them with the prospect of a servile insurrection, that they immediately imprison him. Such was the view of the Federal Constitution taken by James Wilson one of its framers, that, without, as I presume, claiming for Congress any direct power over slavery in the slave States, he declared that it possessed “power to exterminate slavery from within our borders.” It was probably under a like view, that Benjamin Franklin, another of its framers, and Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and other men of glorious and blessed memory, petitioned the first Congress under the Constitution to “countenance the restoration to liberty of those unhappy men,” (the slaves of our country). And in what light that same congress viewed the Constitution may be inferred from the fact, that, by a special act, it ratified the celebrated Ordinance, by the terms of which slavery was forbidden for ever in the North West Territory. It is worthy of note, that the avowed object of the Ordinance harmonizes with that of the Constitution: and that the Ordinance

was passed the same year that the Constitution was drafted, is a fact, on which we 3 18 can strongly rely to justify a reference to the spirit of the one instrument for illustrating the spirit of the other. What the spirit of the Ordinance is, and in what light they who passed it, regarded "republics, their laws and constitutions," may be inferred from the following declaration in the Ordinance of its grand object: "For extending the fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty, which form the basis wherever these Republics, their laws and constitutions are erected; to fix and establish those principles as the basis of all laws, constitutions, and governments, which forever hereafter shall be formed in the said territory, &c.; it is hereby ordained and declared that the following articles, &c." One of these articles is that, which has been referred to, and which declares that "there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory."

You will perhaps make light of my reference to James Wilson and Benjamin Franklin, for I recollect you say, that, "When the Constitution was about going into operation, its powers were not well understood by the community at large, and remained to be accurately interpreted and defined." Nevertheless, I think it wise to repose more confidence in the views, which the framers of the Constitution took of the spirit and principles of that instrument, than in the definitions and interpretations of the pro-slavery generation, which has succeeded them.

It should be regarded as no inconsiderable evidence of the anti-slavery genius and policy of the Constitution, that Congress promptly interdicted slavery in the first portion of territory, and that, too, a territory of vast extent, over which it acquired jurisdiction. And is it not a perfectly reasonable supposition, that the seat of our Government would not have been polluted by the presence of slavery, had Congress acted on that subject by itself, instead of losing sight of it in the wholesale legislation, by which the laws of Virginia and Maryland were revived in the District?

If the Federal Constitution be not anti-slavery in its general scope and character; if it be not impregnated with the principles of universal liberty; why was it necessary, in order to restrain Congress, for a limited period, from acting against the slave trade, which is but a branch or incident of slavery, to have a clause to that end in the Constitution? The fact that the framers of the Constitution refused to blot its pages with the word "slave" or "slavery;" and that, by periphrase and the substitution of "persons" for "slaves," they sought to conceal from posterity and the world the mortifying fact, that slavery existed under a government based on the principle, that governments 19 derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed," contains volumes of proof, that they looked upon American slavery as a decaying institution; and that they would naturally shape the Constitution to the abridgment and the extinction, rather than the extension and perpetuity of the giant vice of the country.

It is not to be denied, that the Constitution tolerates a limited measure of slavery: but it tolerates this measure only as the exception to its rule of impartial and universal liberty. Were it otherwise, the principles of that instrument could be peaded to justify the holding of men as property, in cases, other than those specifically provided for in it. Were it otherwise, these principles might be appealed to, as well to sanction the enslavement of men, as the capture of wild beasts. Were it otherwise, the American people might be Constitutionally realizing the prophet's declaration: "they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man his brother with a net." But mere principles, whether in or out of the Constitution, do not avail to justify and uphold slavery. Says Lord Mansfield in the famous Somerset case: "The state of slavery is of such a nature, that it is incapable of being now introduced by courts of justice upon mere reasoning or inferences from any principles, natural or political; it must take its rise from *positive law*; the origin of it can in no country or age be traced back to any other source. A case so odious as the condition of slaves, must be taken strictly." Grotius says, that "slavery places man in an unnatural relation to man—a relation which nothing but positive law can sustain." All are aware, that, by the common law, man cannot have property in man; and that wherever that law is not counteracted on this point by positive law, "slaves cannot breathe," and their "shackles fall." I scarcely need add, that the Federal Constitution does, in the main, accord with the common law. In the words of a very able writer: "The common law is the grand element of the United States Constitution. All its fundamental provisions are instinct with its spirit; and its existence, principles, and paramount authority, are presupposed and assumed throughout the whole."

To argue the anti-slavery character of the Federal Constitution, it is not necessary to take the high ground of some, that whatever in the Constitution favors slavery is void, because opposed to the principles and general tenor of that instrument. Much less is it necessary to take the still higher ground, that every law in favor of slavery, in whatever code or connection it may be found, is utterly invalid because of its plain contravention of the law of nature. To maintain my position, that the Constitution is anti-slavery in its general character, and that 20 constitutional slavery is, at the most, but an exception to that general character, it was not necessary to take either of these grounds;—though, had I been disposed to take even the higher of them, I should not have lacked the countenance of the most weighty authorities. "The law of nature," says Blackstone, "being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this." The same writer says, that "The law of nature requires, that man should pursue his own true and substantial happiness." But that slavery allows this pursuit to its victims, no one will pretend. "There is a law," says Henry Brougham, "above all the enactments of human codes. It is the law written by the finger of God on the heart of man; and by that law, unchangeable and eternal,

while men despise fraud, and loathe rapine, and abhor blood, they shall reject with indignation the wild and guilty phantasy, that man can hold property in man."

I add no more to what I have said on the subject of slavery in the District of Columbia, than to ask, as I have done in relation to the inter-state slave trade and the annexation of slave states, whether petitions for its abolition argue so great a contempt of the Constitution, and so entire a recklessness of propriety, as to merit the treatment which they receive at the hands of Congress. Admitting that Congress has not the constitutional power to abolish slavery in the District—admitting that it has not the constitutional power to destroy what itself has established—admitting, too, that if it have the power, it ought not to exercise it;—nevertheless, is the case so perfectly clear, that the petitioners for the measure deserve all the abuse and odium which their representatives in Congress heap upon them? In a word, do not the three classes of petitions to which you refer, merit, at the hands of those representatives, the candid and patient consideration which, until I read your acknowledgment, that, in relation to these petitions, "there is no substantial difference between" yourself and those, who are in favor of thrusting them aside undebated, unconsidered, and even unread, I always supposed you were willing to have bestowed on them?

I pass to the examination of your charges against the abolitionists.

They contemn the "rights of property."

This charge you prefer against the abolitionists, not because they believe that a Legislature has the right to abolish slavery, nor because they deny that slaves are legally property; for this obvious truth they do not deny. But you prefer it, because they believe that man cannot rightfully be a subject of property.

Abolitionists believe, to use words, which I have already quoted, that it is "a wild and guilty phantasy, that man can hold property in man." They believe, that to claim property in the exalted being, whom God has made in His own image, and but "a little lower than the angels," is scarcely less absurd than to claim it in the Creator himself. You take the position, that human laws can rightfully reduce a race of men to property; and that the outrage, to use your own language, is "sanctioned and sanctified" by "two hundred years" continuance of it. Abolitionists, on the contrary, trace back man's inalienable self-ownership to enactments of the Divine Legislator, and to the bright morning of time, when he came forth from the hand of his Maker, "crowned with glory and honor," invested with self-control, and with dominion over the brute and inanimate creation. You soothe the conscience of the slaveholder, by reminding him, that the relation, which he has assumed towards his down-trodden fellow-man, is lawful. The abolitionist protests, that the wickedness of the relation is none the less, because it is legalized. In charging abolitionists with contemning "the rights of property," you mistake

the innocent for the guilty party. Were you to be so unhappy as to fall into the hands of a kidnapper, and be reduced to a slave, and were I to remonstrate, though in vain, with your oppressor, who would you think was the despiser of "the rights of property"—myself, or the oppressor? As you would judge in that case, so judges every slave in his similar case.

The man-stealer's complaint, that his "rights of property" in his stolen fellow men are not adequately respected by the abolitionist, recalls to my mind a very similar, and but little more ludicrous case of conscientious regard for "the rights of property." A traveler was plundered of the whole of his large sum of money. He pleaded successfully with the robber for a little of it to enable him to reach his home. But, putting his hand rather deeper into the bag of stolen coins than comported with the views of the robber, he was arrested with the cry, "Why, man, have you no conscience?" You will perhaps inquire, whether abolitionists regard all the slaves of the South as stolen—as well those born at the South, as those, who were confessedly stolen from Africa? I answer, that we do—that every helpless new-born infant, on which the chivalry of the South pounces, is, in our judgment, the owner of itself—that we consider, that the crime of manstealing, which is so terribly denounced in the Bible, does not consist, as is alleged, in stealing a slave from a third person, but in stealing 22 him from himself—in depriving him of self-control, and subjecting him, as property, to the absolute control of another. Joseph's declaration, that he "was stolen," favors this definition of man-stealing. Jewish Commentators authorise it. Money, as it does not own itself, cannot be stolen from itself. But when we reflect, that man is the owner of him. self, it does not surprise us, that wresting away his inalienable rights—his very manhood—should have been called man-stealing.

Whilst on this subject of "the rights of property," I am reminded of your "third impediment to abolition." This "impediment" consists in the fact of the great value of the southern slaves—which, according to your estimation, is not less than "twelve hundred millions of dollars." I will adopt your estimate, and thus spare myself from going into the abhorrent calculation of the worth in dollars and cents of immortal man—of the worth of "the image of God." I thank you for your virtual admission, that this wealth is grasped with a tenacity proportioned to its vast amount. Many of the wisest and best men of the North have been led into the belief, that the slaveholders of the South are too humane and generous to hold their slaves for the sake of gain. Even Dr. Channing was a subject of this delusion; and it is well remembered, that his too favorable opinions of his fellow men, made it difficult to disabuse him of it. Northern Christians have been ready to believe, that the South would give up her slaves, because of her conscious lack of title to them. But in what age of the world have impenitent men failed to cling as closely to that, which they had obtained by fraud, as to their honest acquisitions? Indeed, it is demonstrable on philosophical principles, that the more stupendous the fraud, the more tenacious is the hold upon that, which is gotten by it. I trust, that your admission to which I have just referred, will have no small effect to prevent the Northern apologist for slavery

from repeating the remark, that the South would gladly liberate her slaves, if she saw any prospect of bettering the condition of the objects of her tender and solicitous benevolence. I trust, too, that this admission will go far to prove the emptiness of your declaration, that the abolitionists "have thrown back for half a century the prospect of any species of emancipation of the African race, gradual or immediate, in any of the states," and the emptiness of your declaration, that, "prior to the agitation of this subject of abolition, there was a progressive melioration in the condition of slaves throughout all the slave states," and that "in some of them, schools of instruction were opened," &c.; and I further trust, that this admission will render harmless your intimation, that this "melioration" and these "schools" were intended to prepare the 23 slaves for freedom. After what you have said of the great value of the slaves, and of the obstacle it presents to emancipation, you will meet with little success in your endeavors to convince the world, that the South was preparing to give up the "twelve hundred millions of dollars," and that the naughty abolitionists have postponed her gratification "for half a century." If your views of the immense value of the slaves, and of the consequent opposition to their freedom, be correct, then the hatred of the South towards the abolitionists must be, not because their movements tend to lengthen, but because they tend to shorten the period of her possession of the "twelve hundred millions of dollars." May I ask you, whether, whilst the South clings to these "twelve hundred millions of dollars," it is not somewhat hypocritical in her to be complaining, that the abolitionists are fastening the "twelve hundred millions of dollars" to her? And may I ask you, whether there is not a little inconsistency between your own lamentations over this work of the abolitionists, and your intimation that the South will never consent to give up her slaves, until the impossibility, of paying her "twelve hundred millions of dollars" for them, shall have been accomplished? Puerile and insulting as is your proposition to the abolitionists to raise "twelve hundred millions of dollars" for the purchase of the slaves, it is nevertheless instructive; inasmuch as it shows, that, in your judgment, the South is as little willing to give up her slaves, as the abolitionists are able to pay "twelve hundred millions of dollars" for them; and how unable the abolitionists are to pay a sum of money far greater than the whole amount of money in the world, I need not explain.

But if the South must have "twelve hundred millions of dollars" to induce her to liberate her present number of slaves, how can you expect success for your scheme of ridding her of several times the present number, "in the progress of some one hundred and fifty, or two hundred years?" Do you reply, that, although she must have "four hundred dollars" a piece for them, if she sell them to the abolitionists, she is, nevertheless, willing to let the Colonization Society have them without charge? There is abundant proof, that she is not. During the twenty-two years of the existence of that Society, not so many slaves have been emancipated and given to it for expatriation, as are born in a single week. As a proof that the sympathies of the South are all with the slaveholding and *real* character of this two-faced institution, and not at all with the abolition purposes and tendencies, which it professes at the North, none of its Presidents, (and slave-holders 24 only are deemed worthy to

preside over it,) has ever contributed from his stock of slaves to swell those bands of emigrants, who, leaving our shores in the character of “nuisances,” are instantly transformed, to use your own language, into “missionaries, carrying with them credentials in the holy cause of Christianity, civilization, and free institutions.” But you were not in earnest, when you held up the idea in your recent speech, that the rapidly multiplying millions of our colored countrymen would be expatriated. What you said on that point was but to indulge in declamation, and to round off a paragraph. It is in that part of your speech where you say that “no practical scheme for their removal or separation from us has yet been devised or proposed,” that you exhibit your real sentiments on this subject, and impliedly admit the deceitfulness of the pretensions of the American Colonization Society.

Before closing my remarks on the topic of “the rights of property,” I will admit the truth of your charge, that *Abolitionists deny, that the slaveholder is entitled to “compensation” for liberating his slaves.*

Abolitionists do not know, why he, who steals men is, any more than he, who steals horses, entitled to “compensation” for releasing his plunder. They do not know, why he, who has exacted thirty years’ unrequited toil from the sinews of his poor oppressed brother, should be paid for letting that poor oppressed brother labor for himself the remaining ten or twenty years of his life. But, it is said, that the South bought her slaves of the North, and that we of the North ought therefore to compensate the South for liberating them. If there are individuals at the North, who have sold slaves, I am free to admit, that they should promptly surrender their ill-gotten gains; and no less promptly should the inheritors of such gains surrender them. But, however this may be, and whatever debt may be due on this score, from the North to the South, certain it is, that on no principle of sound ethics, can the South hold to the persons of the innocent slaves, as security for the payment of the debt. Your state and mine, and I would it were so with all others, no longer allow the imprisonment of the debtor as a means of coercing payment from him. How much less, then, should they allow the creditor to promote the security of his debt by imprisoning a third person—and one who is wholly innocent of contracting the debt? But who is imprisoned, if it be not he, who is shut up in “the house of bondage?” And who is more entirely innocent than he, of the guilty transactions between his seller and buyer?

Another of your charges against abolitionists is, *that, although “utterly 25 destitute of Constitutional or other rightful power—living in totally distinct communities—as alien to the communities in which the subject on which they would operate resides, so far as concerns political power over that subject, as if they lived in Africa or Asia; they never theless promulgate to the world their purpose to be, to manumit forthwith, and without compensation, and without moral preparation, three millions of negro slaves, under jurisdictions altogether separated from those under which they live.”*

I will group with this charge several others of the same class.

1. *Abolitionists neglect the fact, that“ the slavery which exists amongst us (southern people) is our affair—not theirs—and that they have no more just concern with it, than they have with slavery as it exists throughout the world.”*

2. *They are regardless of the “deficiency of the powers of the General Government, and of the acknowledged and incontestable powers of the States.”*

3. *“Superficial men (meaning no doubt abolitionists) confound the totally different cases together of the powers of the British Parliament and those of the Congress of the United States in the matter of slavery.”*

Are these charges any thing more than the imagery of your own fancy, or selections from the numberless slanders of a time-serving and corrupt press? If they are founded on facts, it is in your power to state the facts. For my own part, I am utterly ignorant of any, even the least, justification for them. I am utterly ignorant that the abolitionists hold any peculiar views in relation to the powers of the General or State Governments. I do not believe, that one in a hundred of them supposes, that slavery in the states is a legitimate subject of federal legislation. I believe, that a majority of the intelligent men amongst them accord much more to the claims of “state sovereignty,” and approach far more nearly to the character of “strict constructionists,” than does the distinguished statesman, who charges them with such latitudinarian notions. There may be persons in our country, who believe that Congress has the absolute power over all American slavery, which the British Parliament had over all British slavery; and that Congress can abolish slavery in the slave states, because Great Britain abolished it in her West India Islands; but, I do not know them; and were I to look for them, I certainly should not confine my search to abolitionists—for abolitionists, as it is very natural they should be, are far better instructed in the subject of slavery and its connections with civil government, than are the community in general.

It is passing strange, that you, or any other man, who is not playing a desperate game, should, in the face of the Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society, which “admits, that each state, in which slavery exists, has, by the Constitution of the United States, the exclusive right to legislate in regard to the abolition of slavery in said state;” make such charges, as you have done.

In an Address “To the Public,” dated September 3, 1835, and subscribed by the President, Treasurer, the three Secretaries, and the other five members of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, we find the following language. 1. “We hold that Congress has no more right to abolish slavery in the Southern states than in the French West India Islands. Of course we desire

no national legislation on the subject. 2. We hold that slavery can only be lawfully abolished by the legislatures of the several states in which it prevails, and that the exercise of any other than moral influence to induce such abolition is unconstitutional.”

But what slavery is it that the abolitionists call on Congress to abolish? Is it that in the slave states? No—it is that in the District of Columbia and in the territories—none other. And is it not a fair implication of their petitions, that this is the only slavery, which, in the judgment of the petitioners, Congress has power to abolish? Nevertheless, it is in the face of this implication, that you make your array of charges.

Is it true, however, that the North has nothing more to do with slavery in the states, than with slavery in a foreign country? Does it not concern the North, that, whilst it takes many thousands of her voters to be entitled to a representative in Congress, there are districts at the South, where, by means of slavery, a few hundred voters enjoy this benefit. Again, since the North regards herself as responsible in common with the South, for the continuance of slavery in the District of Columbia and in the Territories, and for the continuance of the interstate traffic in human beings; and since she believes slavery in the slave states to be the occasion of these crimes, and that they will all of necessity immediately cease when slavery ceases—is it not right, that she should feel that she has a “just concern with slavery?” Again, is it nothing to the people of the North, that they may be called on, in obedience to a requirement of the federal constitution, to shoulder their muskets to quell “domestic violence?” But, who does not know, that this requirement owes its existence solely to the apprehension²⁷ of servile insurrections?—or, in other words, to the existence of slavery in the slave states? Again, when our guiltless brothers escape from the southern prison-house, and come among us, we are under constitutional obligation to deliver them up to their stony-hearted pursuers. And is not slavery in the slave states, which is the occasion of our obligation to commit this outrage on humanity and on the law of God, a matter of “just concern to us?” To what too, but slavery, in the slave states, is to be ascribed the long standing insult of our government towards that of Hayti? To what but that, our national disadvantages and losses from the want of diplomatic relations between the two governments? To what so much, as to slavery in the slave states, are owing the corruption in our national councils, and the worst of our legislation? But scarcely any thing should go farther to inspire the North with a sense of her “just concern” in the subject of slavery in the slave states, than the fact, that slavery is the parent of the cruel and murderous prejudice, which crushes and kills her colored people; and, that it is but too probable, that the child will live as long as its parent. And has the North no “just concern” with the slavery of the slave states, when there is so much reason to fear that our whole blood-guilty nation is threatened with God's destroying wrath on account of it?

There is another respect in which we of the North have a "just concern" with the slavery of the slave states. We see nearly three millions of our fellow men in those states robbed of body, mind, will, and soul—denied marriage and the reading of the Bible, and marketed as beasts. We see them in a word crushed in the iron folds of slavery. Our nature—the laws written upon its very foundations—the Bible, with its injunctions "to remember them that are in bonds as bound with them," and to "open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction"—all require us to feel and to express what we feel for these wretched millions. I said, that we see this misery. There are many amongst us—they are anti-abolitionists—who do not see it; and to them God says; "but he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse."

I add, that we of the North must feel concerned about slavery in the slave states, because of our obligation to pity the deluded, hardhearted, and bloody oppressors in those states: and to manifest our love for them by rebuking their unsurpassed sin. And, notwithstanding pro-slavery statesmen at the North, who wink at the iniquity of slaveholding, and pro-slavery clergymen at the North, who cry, "peace, peace" to the slaveholder, and sew "pillows to armholes," tell us, that by our 28 honest and open rebuke of the slaveholder, we shall incur his enduring hatred; we, nevertheless, believe that "open rebuke is better than secret love," and that, in the end, we shall enjoy more Southern favor than they, whose secret love is too prudent and spurious to deal faithfully with the objects of its regard. "He that rebuketh a man, afterward shall find more favor than he that flattereth with the tongue." The command, "thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor and not suffer sin upon him," is one, which the abolitionist feels, that he is bound to obey, as well in the case of the slaveholder, as in that of any other sinner. And the question: "who is my neighbor," is so answered by the Savior, as to show, that not he of our vicinity, nor even he of our country, is alone our "neighbor."

The abolitionists of the North hold, that they have certainly as much "just concern" with slavery in the slave states, as the temperance men of the North have with "intemperance" at the South. And I would here remark, that the weapons with which the abolitionists of the North attack slavery in the slave states are the same, and no other than the same, with those, which the North employs against the vice of intemperance at the South. I add too, that were you to say, that northern temperance men disregard "the deficiency of the powers of the General Government," and also "the acknowledged and incontestable powers of the states;" your charge would be as suitable as when it is applied to northern abolitionists.

You ascribe to us "the purpose to manumit the three millions of negro slaves." Here again you greatly misrepresent us, by holding us up as employing coercive, instead of persuasive, means for the accomplishment of our object. Our "purpose" is to persuade others to "manumit." The slaveholders themselves are to "manumit." It is evident, that others cannot "manumit" for them.

If the North were endeavoring to persuade the South to give up the growing of cotton, you would not say, it is the purpose of the North to give it up. But, as well might you, as to say, that it is the "purpose" of the abolitionists to "manumit." It is very much by such misrepresentations, that the prejudices against abolitionists are fed and sustained. How soon they would die of atrophy, if they, who influence the public mind and mould public opinion, would tell but the simple truth about abolitionists.

You say, that the abolitionists would have the slaves manumitted "without compensation and without moral preparation." I have already said enough on the point of "compensation." It is true, that they would have them manumitted immediately:—for they believe 29 slavery is sin, and that therefore the slaveholder has no right to protract the bondage of his slaves for a single year, or for a single day or hour;—not even, were he to do so to afford them "a moral preparation" for freedom, or to accomplish any other of the kindest and best purposes. They believe, that the relation of slaveholder, as it essentially and indispensably involves the reduction of men to chattelship, cannot, under any plea whatever, be continued with innocence, for a single moment. If it can be—if the plain laws of God, in respect to marriage and religious instruction and many other blessings, of which *chattelized* man is plundered, can be innocently violated—why credit any longer the assertion of the Bible, that "sin is the transgression of the law?"—why not get a new definition of sin?

Another reason with abolitionists in favor of immediate manumission, is, that the slaves do not, as a body, acquire, whilst in slavery, any "moral preparation" for freedom. To learn to swim we must be allowed the use of water. To learn the exercises of a freeman, we must enjoy the element of liberty. I will not say, that slaves cannot be taught, to some extent, the duties of freemen. Some knowledge of the art of swimming may be acquired before entering the water. I have not forgotten what you affirm about the "progressive melioration in the condition of slaves," and the opening of "schools of instruction" for them" prior to the agitation of the subject of abolition;" nor, have I forgotten, that I could not read it without feeling, that the creations of your fancy, rather than the facts of history, supplied this information. Instances, rare instances, of such "melioration" and of such "schools of instruction," I doubt not there have been: but, I am confident, that the Southern slaves have been sunk in depths of ignorance proportioned to the profits of their labor. I have not the least belief, that the proportion of readers amongst them is one half so great, as it was before the invention of Whitney's cotton gin.

Permit me to call your attention to a few of the numberless evidences, that slavery is a poor school for "moral preparation" for freedom. 1st. Slavery turns its victims into thieves. "Who should be astonished," says Thomas S. Clay, a very distinguished slaveholder of Georgia, "if the negro takes from the field or corn-house the supplies necessary for his craving appetite and then justifies his act,

and denies that it is stealing?" What debasement in the slave does the same gentleman's remedy for theft indicate? "If," says he, "the negro is informed, that if he does not steal, he shall receive rice as an allowance; and if he does steal, he shall not, a motive is held out which will counteract the temptation to pilfer." 2nd. Slavery reeks 30 with licentiousness. Another son of the South says, that the slaveholder's kitchen is a brothel, and a southern village a Sodom. The elaborate defence of slavery by Chancellor Harper of South Carolina justifies the heaviest accusations, that have been brought against it on the score of licentiousness. How could you blame us for deeply abhorring slavery, even were we to view it in no other light than that in which the Dews and Harpers and its other advocates present it? 3rd. Slavery puts the master in the place of God, and the master's law in the place of God's law! "The negro," says Thomas S. Clay, "is seldom taught to feel, that he is punished for breaking God's law! He only knows his master as law-giver and executioner, and the sole object held up to his view is to make him a more obedient and profitable slave. He oftener hears that he shall be punished if he steals, than if he breaks the Sabbath or swears; and thus he sees the very threatenings of God brought to bear on his master's interests. It is very manifest to him, that his own good is very far from forming the primary reason for his chastisement: his master's interests are to be secured at all events;—God's claims are secondary, or enforced merely for the purpose of advancing those of his owner. His own benefit is the residuum after this double distillation of moral motive—a mere accident." 4th. The laws of nearly all the slave-states forbid the teaching of the slaves to read. The abundant declarations, that those laws are without exception, a consequence of the present agitation of the question of slavery are glaringly false. Many of these laws were enacted long before this agitation; and some of them long before you and I were born. Say the three hundred and fifty-three gentlemen of the District of Abbeville and Edgefield in South Carolina, who, the last year, broke up a system of oral religious instruction, which the Methodist Conference of that State had established amongst their slaves: "Intelligence and slavery have no affinity for each other." And when those same gentlemen declare, that "verbal and lecturing instruction will increase a desire with the black population to learn"—that "the progress and diffusion of knowledge will be a consequence"—and that "a progressive system of improvement will be introduced, that will ultimately revolutionize our civil institutions," they admit, that the prohibition of "intelligence" to the slaves is the settled and necessary policy of slavery, and not, as you would have us believe, a temporary expedient occasioned by the present "agitation of this subject of abolition." 5th. Slavery—the system, which forbids marriage and the reading of the Bible—does of necessity turn its subjects into heathens. A Report of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, 31 made five years ago, says: "Who could credit it, that in these years of revival and benevolent effort—that, in this Christian Republic, there are over two millions of human beings in the condition of heathen, and in some respects in a worse condition? They may be justly considered the heathen of this Christian country, and will bear comparison with heathen in any country in the world." I will finish what I have to say on this point of "moral preparation" for freedom, with the remark, that the history of slavery in

no country warrants your implication, that slaves acquire such “moral preparation.” The British Parliament substituted an apprenticeship for slavery with the express design, that it should afford a “moral preparation” for freedom. And yet, if you will read the reports of late visitors to the British West Indies, you will find, that the planters admit, that they made no use of the advantages of the apprenticeship to prepare their servants for liberty. Their own gain—not the slaves’—was their ruling motive, during the term of the apprenticeship, as well as preceding it.

Another of your charges is, *that the abolitionists “have increased the rigors of legislation against slaves in most if not all the slave States.”*

And suppose, that our principles and measures have occasioned this evil—are they therefore wrong?—and are we, therefore, involved in sin? The principles and measures of Moses and Aaron were the occasion of a similar evil. Does it follow, that those principles and measures were wrong, and that Moses and Aaron were responsible for the sin of Pharaoh's increased oppressiveness? The truth, which Jesus Christ preached on the earth, is emphatically peace: but its power on the depravity of the human heart made it the occasion of division and violence. That depravity was the guilty cause of the division and violence. The truth was but the innocent occasion of them. To make it responsible for the effects of that depravity would be as unreasonable, as it is to make the holy principles of the anti-slavery cause responsible for the wickedness which they occasion: and to make the great Preacher Himself responsible for the division and violence, would be but to carry out the absurdity, of which the public are guilty, in holding abolitionists responsible for the mobs, which are got up against them. These mobs, by the way, are called “abolition mobs.” A similar misnomer would pronounce the mob, that should tear down your house and shoot your wife, “Henry Clay's mob.” Harriet Martineau, in stating the fact, that the mobs of 1834, in the city of New York, were set down to the wrong account, 32 says, that the abolitionists were told, that “they had no business to scare the city with the sight of their burning property and demolished churches!”

No doubt the light of truth, which the abolitionists are pouring into the dark den of slavery, greatly excites the monster's wrath: and it may be, that he vents a measure of it on the helpless and innocent victims within his grasp. Be it so;—it is nevertheless, not the Ithuriel spear of truth, that is to be held guilty of the harm:—it is the monster's own depravity, which cannot “endure Touch of celestial temper, but returns Of force to its own likeness.”

I am, however, far from believing, that the treatment of the slaves is rendered any more rigorous and cruel by the agitation of the subject of slavery. I am very far from believing, that it is any harsher now than it was before the organization of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Fugitive slaves tell us, it is not: and, inasmuch as the slaveholders are, and, by both words and actions, abundantly show, that they feel that they are, arraigned by the abolitionists before the bar of the civilized world, to

answer to the charges of perpetrating cruelties on their slaves, it would, unless indeed, they are of the number of those “whose glory is in their shame,” be most unphilosophical to conclude, that they are multiplying proofs of the truth of those charges, more rapidly than at any former stage of their barbarities. That slaveholders are not insensible to public opinion and to the value of a good character was strikingly exhibited by Mr. Calhoun, in his place in the Senate of the United States, when he followed his frank disclaimer of all suspicion, that the abolitionists are meditating a war against the slaveholder's person, with remarks evincive of his sensitiveness under the war, which they are waging against the slaveholder's character.

A fact occurs to me, which goes to show, that the slaveholders feel themselves to be put upon their good behavior by the abolitionists. Although slaves are murdered every day at the South, yet never, until very recently, if at all, has the case occurred, in which a white man has been executed at the South for the murder of a slave. A few months ago, the Southern newspapers brought us copies of the document, containing the refusal of Governor Butler of South Carolina to pardon a man, who had been convicted of the murder of a slave. This document dwells on the protection due to the slave; and, if I fully recollect its character, an abolitionist himself could hardly have prepared a more appropriate paper for the occasion. Whence such a document—whence, in the editorial captions to this document, the exultation over its triumphant refutations of the slanders of the abolitionists against the South—but, that Governor Butler feels—but, that the writers of those captions feel—that the abolitionists have put the South upon her good behavior.

Another of your charges is, *that the abolitionists oppose “the project of colonization.”*

Having, under another head, made some remarks on this “project,” I will only add, that We must oppose the American Colonization Society, because it denies the sinfulness of slavery, and the duty of immediate, unqualified emancipation. Its avowed doctrine is, that, unless emancipation be accompanied by expatriation, perpetual slavery is to be preferred to it. Not to oppose that Society, would be the guiltiest treachery to our holy religion, which requires immediate and unconditional repentance of sin. Not to oppose it, would be to uphold slavery. Not to oppose it, would be to abandon the Anti-Slavery Society. Do you ask, why, if this be the character of the American Colonization Society, many, who are now abolitionists, continued in it so long? I answer for myself, that, until near the period of my withdrawal from it, I had very inadequate conceptions of the wickedness, both of that Society, and of slavery. For having felt the unequalled sin of slavery no more deeply—for feeling it now no more deeply, I confess myself to be altogether without excuse. The great criminality of my long continuance in the Colonization Society is perhaps somewhat palliated by the fact, that the strongest proofs of the wicked character and tendencies of the Society were

not exhibited, until it spread out its wing over slavery to shelter the monster from the earnest and effective blows of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Another of your charges is, that the abolitionists, in declaring "that their object is not to stimulate the action of the General Government, but to operate upon the States themselves, in which the institution of domestic slavery exists," are evidently insincere, since the "abolition societies and movements are all confined to the free States."

I readily admit, that our object is the abolition of slavery, as well in the slave States, as in other portions of the Nation, where it exists. But, does it follow, because only an insignificant share of our "abolition societies and movements" is in those States, that we therefore depend for the abolition of slavery in them on the General Government, ⁵ ³⁴ rather than on moral influence? I need not repeat, that the charge of our looking to the General Government for such abolition is refuted by the language of the Constitution of the Anti-Slavery Society. You may, however, ask—"why, if you do not look to the General Government for it, is not the great proportion of your means of moral influence in the slave States, where is the great body of the slaves?" I answer that, in the first place, the South does not permit us to have them there; and that, in the words of one of your fellow Senators, and in the very similar words of another—both uttered on the floor of the Senate—"if the abolitionists come to the South, the South will hang them." Pardon the remark, that it seems very disingenuous in you to draw conclusions unfavorable to the sincerity of the abolitionists from premises so notoriously false, as are those which imply, that it is entirely at their own option, whether the abolitionists shall have their "societies and movements" in the free or slave States. I continue to answer your question, by saying, in the second place, that, had the abolitionists full liberty to multiply their "societies and movements" in the slave States, they would probably think it best to have the great proportion of them yet awhile in the free States. To rectify public opinion on the subject of slavery is a leading object with abolitionists This object is already realized to the extent of a thorough anti-slavery sentiment in Great Britain, as poor Andrew Stevenson, for whom you apologise, can testify. Indeed, the great power and pressure of that sentiment are the only apology left to this disgraced and miserable man for uttering a bald falsehood in vindication of Virginia morals. He above all other men, must feel the truth of the distinguished Thomas Fowel Buxton's declaration, that "England is turned into one great Anti-Slavery Society." Now, Sir, it is such a change, as abolitionists have been the instruments of producing in Great Britain, that we hope to see produced in the free States. We hope to see public sentiment in these States so altered, that such of their laws, as uphold and countenance slavery, will be repealed—so altered, that the present brutal treatment of the colored population in them will give place to a treatment dictated by justice, humanity, and brotherly and Christian love;—so altered, that there will be thousands, where now there are not hundreds, to class the products of slave labor with other stolen goods, and to refuse

to eat and to wear that, which is wet with the tears, and red with the blood of “the poor innocents,” whose bondage is continued, because men are more concerned to buy what is cheap, than what is honestly acquired;—so altered, that Our 35 Missionary and other religious Societies will remember, that God says: “I hate robbery for burnt-offering,” and will forbear to send their agents after that plunder, which, as it is obtained at the sacrifice of the body and soul of the plundered, is infinitely more unfit, than the products of ordinary theft, to come into the Lord's treasury. And, when the warm desires of our hearts, on these points, shall be realized. the fifty thousand Southerners, who annually visit the North, for purposes of business and pleasure, will not all return to their homes, self-complacent and exulting, as now, when they carry with them the suffrages of the North in favor of slavery: but numbers of them will return to pursue the thoughts inspired by their travels amongst the enemies of oppression—and, in the sequel, they will let their “oppressed go free.”

It were almost as easy for the sun to call up vegetation by the side of an iceberg, as for the abolitionists to move the South extensively, whilst their influence is counteracted by a pro-slavery spirit at the North. How vain would be the attempt to reform the drunkards of your town of Lexington, whilst the sober in it continue to drink intoxicating liquors! The first step in the reformation is to induce the sober to change their habits, and create that total abstinence-atmosphere, in the breathing of which, the drunkard lives,—and, for the want of which, he dies. The first step, in the merciful work of delivering the slaveholder from his sin, is similar. It is to bring him under the influence of a corrected public opinion—of an anti-slavery sentiment:—and they, who are to be depended on to contribute to this public opinion—to make up this anti-slavery sentiment—are those, who are not bound up in the iron habits, and blinded by the mighty interests of the slaveholder. To depend on slaveholders to give the lead to public opinion in the anti-slavery enterprise, would be no less absurd, than to begin the temperance reformation with drunkards, and to look to them to produce the influences, which are indispensable to their own redemption.

You say of the abolitionists, *that “they are in favor of amalgamation.”*

The Anti-Slavery Society is, as its name imports, a society to oppose slavery—not to “make matches.” Whether abolitionists are inclined to amalgamation more than anti-abolitionists are, I will not here take upon myself to decide. So far, as you and I may be regarded as representatives of these two parties, and so far as our marriages argue our tastes in this matter, the abolitionists and anti-abolitionists 36 may be set down, as equally disposed to couple white with white and black with black—for our wives, as you are aware, are both white. I will here mention, as it may further argue the similarity in the matrimonial tastes of abolitionists and anti-abolitionists, the fact so grateful to us in the days, when we were “workers together” in promoting the “scheme of Colonization,” that our wives are natives of the same town.

I have a somewhat extensive acquaintance at the North; and I can truly say, that I do not know a white abolitionist, who is the reputed father of a colored child, At the South there are several hundred thousand persons, whose yellow skins testify, that the white man's blood courses through their veins. Whether the honorable portion of their parentage is to be ascribed exclusively to the few abolitionists scattered over the South—and who, under such supposition, must, indeed, be prodigies of industry and prolificness—or whether anti-abolitionists there have, notwithstanding all their pious horror of “amalgamation,” been contributing to it, you can better judge than myself.

That slavery is a great amalgamator, no one acquainted with the blended colors of the South will, for a moment, deny. But, that an increasing amalgamation would attend the liberation of the slaves, is quite improbable, when we reflect, that the extensive occasions of the present mixture are the extreme debasement of the blacks and their entire subjection to the will of the whites; and that even should the debasement continue under a state of freedom, the subjection would not. It is true, that the colored population of our country might in a state of freedom, attain to an equality with the whites; and that a multiplication of instances of matrimonial union between the two races might be a consequence of this equality: but, besides that this would be a lawful and sinless union, instead of the adulterous and wicked one, which is the fruit of slavery, would not the improved condition of our down-trodden brethren be a blessing infinitely overbalancing all the violations of our taste, which it might occasion? I say violations of our taste;—for we must bear in mind that, offensive as the intermixture of different races may be to us, the country or age, which practices it, has no sympathy whatever with our feeling on this point.

How strongly and painfully it argues the immorality and irreligion of the American people, that they should look so complacently on the “amalgamation,” which tramples the seventh commandment under foot, and yet be so offended at that, which has the sanction of lawful wedlock! When the Vice President of this Nation was in nomination for his present office, it was objected to him, that he had a family ³⁷ of colored children. The defence, set up by his partisans, was, that, although he had such a family, he nevertheless was not married to their mother! The defence was successful; and the charge lost all its odiousness; and the Vice President's popularity was retrieved, when, it turned out, that he was only the adulterous, and not the married father of his children!

I am aware, that many take the ground, that we must keep the slaves in slavery to prevent the matrimonial “amalgamation,” which, they apprehend, would be a fruit of freedom. But, however great a good, abolitionists might deem the separation of the white and black races, and however deeply they might be impressed with the power of slavery to promote this separation, they, nevertheless, dare not “do evil, that good may come:”—they dare not seek to promote this

separation, at the fearful expense of upholding, or in anywise, countenancing a humanity-crushing and God-defying system of oppression.

Another charge against the abolitionists is implied in the inquiry you make, whether since they do not "*furnish in their own families or persons examples of intermarriage, they intend to contaminate the industrious and laborious classes of society of the North by a revolting admixture of the black element.*"

This inquiry shows how difficult it is for southern minds, accustomed as they have ever been to identify labor with slavery, to conceive the true character and position of such "classes" at the North; and also how ignorant they are of the composition of our Anti-Slavery societies. To correct your misapprehensions on these points, I will briefly say, in the first place, that the laborers of the North are freemen and not slaves;—that they marry whom they please, and are neither paired nor unpaired to suit the interests of the breeder, or seller, or buyer, of human stock:—and, in the second place, that the abolitionists, instead of being a body of persons distinct from "the industrious and laborious classes," do, more than nineteen twentieths of them, belong to those "classes." You have fallen into a great error in supposing, that *abolitionists* generally belong to the wealthy and aristocratic classes. This, to a great extent, is true of *anti-abolitionists*. Have you never heard the boast, that there have been anti-abolition mobs, which consisted of "gentlemen of property and standing?"

You charge upon abolitionists "*the purpose to create a pinching competition between black labor and white labor;*" and add, that "*on the supposition of abolition, the black class, migrating into the free states, would enter into competition with the white class, diminishing the wages of their labor.*"

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In making this charge, as well as in making that which immediately precedes it, you have fallen into the error, that abolitionists do not belong to "the industrious and laborious classes." In point of fact, the abolitionists belong so generally to these classes, that if your charge be true, they must have the strange "purpose" of "pinching" themselves.

Whether "the black class" would, or would not migrate, I am much more pleased to have you say what you do on this point, though it be at the expense of your consistency, than to have you say, as you do in another part of your speech, that abolition "would end in the extermination or subjugation of the one race or the other."

It appears to me highly improbable, that emancipation would be followed by the migration of the emancipated. Emancipation, which has already added fifty per cent. to the value of estates in the British West Indies, would immediately add as much to the value of the soil of the South. Much

more of it would be brought into use; and, notwithstanding the undoubted truth, that the freedman performs twice as much labor as when a slave, the South would require, instead of any diminution, a very great increase of the number of her laborers. The laboring population of the British West India Islands, is one-third as large as that of the southern states; and yet, since these islands have got rid of slavery, and have entered on their career of enterprize and industry, they find this population, great as it is, insufficient to meet the increased demand for labor. As you are aware, they are already inviting laborers of this and other countries to supply the deficiency. But what is the amount of cultivable land in those islands, compared with that in all the southern states? It is not so extensive as the like land in your single state.

But you may suppose, that, in the event of the emancipation of her slaves, the South would prefer white laborers. I know not why she should. Such are, for the most part, unaccustomed to her kinds of labor, and they would exact, because they would need, far greater wages than those, who had never been indulged beyond the gratification of their simplest wants. There is another point of view, in which it is still more improbable, that the black laborers of the South would be displaced by immigrations of white laborers. The proverbial attachment of the slave to his "bornin-ground," (the place of his nativity,) would greatly contribute to his contentment with low wages, at the hands of his old master. As an evidence of the strong attachment of our southern colored brethren to their birth-places, I remark, that, whilst the free colored population of the free states increased from 1820 to 1830 but 39 nineteen per cent., the like population in the slave states increased, in the same period, thirty, five per cent;—and this, too, notwithstanding the operation of those oppressive and cruel laws, whose enactment was dictated by the settled policy of expelling the free blacks from the South.

That, in the event of the abolition of southern slavery, the emancipated slaves would migrate to the North, rather than elsewhere, is very improbable. Whilst our climate would be unfriendly to them, and whilst they would be strangers to our modes of agriculture, the sugar and cotton fields of Texas, the West Indies, and other portions of the earth, would invite them to congenial employments beneath congenial skies. That, in case southern slavery is abolished, the colored population of the North would be drawn off to unite with their race at the South, is, for reasons too obvious to mention, far more probable than the reverse.

It will be difficult for you to persuade the North, that she would suffer in a pecuniary point of view by the extirpation of slavery. The consumption of the laborers at the South would keep pace with the improvement and elevation of their condition, and would very soon impart a powerful impulse to many branches of Northern industry.

Another of your charges is in the following words: "The subject of slavery within the District of Florida," and that "of the right of Congress to prohibit the removal of slaves from one state to

another," are, with abolitionists, "but so many masked batteries, concealing the real and ultimate point of attack. That point of attack is the institution of domestic slavery, as it exists in those states."

If you mean by this charge, that abolitionists think that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and in Florida, and the suppression of the inter-state traffic in human beings are, in themselves, of but little moment, you mistake. If you mean, that they think them of less importance than the abolition of slavery in the slave states, you are right; and if you further mean, that they prize those objects more highly, and pursue them more zealously, because they think, that success in them will set in motion very powerful, if not indeed resistless influences against slavery in the slave states, you are right in this also. I am aware, that the latter concession brings abolitionists under the condemnation of that celebrated book, written by a *modern* limiter of "human responsibility"—not by the *ancient* one, who exclaimed, "Am I my brother's keeper?" In that book, to which, by the way, the infamous Atherton Resolutions are indebted for their keynote, and grand pervading idea, we find the doctrine, that even if it 40 were the duty of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, the North nevertheless should not seek for such abolition, unless the object of it be "ultimate within itself." If it be "for the sake of something ulterior" also—if for the sake of inducing the slaveholders of the slave states to emancipate their slaves—then we should not seek for it. Let us try this doctrine in another application—in one, where its distinguished author will not feel so much delicacy, and so much fear of giving offence, His reason why we should not go for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, unless our object in it be "ultimate within itself," and unaccompanied by the object of producing an influence against slavery in the slave states, is, that the Federal Constitution has left the matter of slavery in the slave states to those states themselves. But will President Wayland say, that it has done so to any greater extent, than it has left the matter of gambling-houses and brothels in those states to those states themselves? He will not, if he consider the subject:—though, I doubt not, that when he wrote his bad book, he was under the prevailing error, that the Federal Constitution tied up the hands and limited the power of the American people in respect to slavery, more than to any other vice.

But to the other application. We will suppose, that Great Britain has put down the gambling, houses and brothels in her wide dominions—that Mexico has done likewise; and that the George Thompsons, and Charles Stuarts, and other men of God, have come from England to beseech the people of the northern states to do likewise within their respective jurisdictions;—and we will further suppose, that those foreign missionaries, knowing the obstinate and infatuated attachment of the people of the southern states to their gambling-houses and brothels, should attempt, and successfully, too, to blend with the motive of the people of the northern states to get rid of their own gambling-houses and brothels, the motive of influencing the people of the southern states to get rid of theirs—what, we ask, would this eminent divine advise in such a case? Would he have the

people of the northern states go on in their good work, and rejoice in the prospect, not only that these polluting and ruinous establishments would soon cease to exist within all their limits, but that the influence of their overthrow would be fatal to the like establishments in the southern states? To be consistent with himself—with the doctrine in question—he must reply in the negative. To be consistent with himself, he must advise the people of the northern states to let their own gambling-houses and brothels stand, until they can make the object of their abolishment 41 “ultimate within itself;”—until they can expel from their hearts the cherished hope, that the purification of their own states of these haunts of wickedness would exert an influence to induce the people of their sister states to enter upon a similar work of purity and righteousness. But I trust, that President Wayland would not desire to be consistent with himself on this point. I trust that he would have the magnanimity to throw away this perhaps most pernicious doctrine of a pernicious book, which every reader of it must see was written to flatter and please the slaveholder and arrest the progress of the anti-slavery cause. How great the sin of seizing on this very time, when special efforts are being made to enlist the world's sympathies in behalf of the millions of our robbed, outraged, crushed countrymen—how great the sin, of seizing on such a time to attempt to neutralize those efforts, by ascribing to the oppressors of these millions a characteristic “nobleness”—“enthusiastic attachment to personal right”—“disinterestedness which has always marked the southern character”—and a superiority to all others “in making any sacrifice for the public good!” It is this sin—this heinous sin—of which President Wayland has to repent. If he pities the slave, it is because he knows, that the qualities, which he ascribes to the slaveholder, do not, in fact, belong to him. On the other hand, if he believes the slaveholder to be, what he represents him to be, he does not—in the very nature of things, he cannot—pity the slave. He must rather rejoice, that the slave has fallen into the hands of one, who, though he has the name, cannot have the heart, and cannot continue in the relation of a slaveholder. If John Hook, for having mingled his discordant and selfish cries with the acclamations of victory and the general joy, deserved Patrick Henry's memorable rebuke, what does he not deserve, who finds it in his heart to arrest the swelling tide of pity for the oppressed by praises of the oppressor, and to drown the public lament over the slave's subjection to absolute power, in the congratulation, that the slaveholder who exercises that power, is a being of characteristic “nobleness,” “disinterestedness,” and “sacrifice” of self-interest?

President Wayland may perhaps say, that the moral influence, which he is unwilling to have exerted over the slaveholder, is not that, which is simply persuasive, but that, which is constraining—not that, which is simply inducing, but that, which is compelling. I cheerfully admit, that it is infinitely better to induce men to do right from their own approbation of the right, than it is to shame them, or in any other wise constrain them, to do so; but I can never admit, that I am not at liberty to 6 42 effect the release of my colored brother from the fangs of his murderous oppressor, when I can

do so by bringing public opinion to bear upon that oppressor, and to fill him with uneasiness and shame.

I have not overlooked the distinction taken by the reverend gentleman; though, I confess that, to a mind no less obtuse than my own, it is very little better than “a distinction without a difference.” Whilst he denies, that I can, as an American citizen, rightfully labor for the abolition of slavery in the slave states, or even in the District of Columbia; he would perhaps, admit that, as a man, I might do so. But am I not interested, as an American citizen, to have every part of my country cleared of vice, and of whatever perils its free institutions? Am I not interested, as such, to promote the overthrow of gambling and rum-drinking establishments in South Carolina?—but why any more than to promote the overthrow of slavery? In fine, am I not interested, as an American citizen, to have my country, and my whole country, “right in the sight of God?” If not, I had better not be an American citizen.

I say no more on the subject of the sophistries of President Wayland's book on, “The limitations of human responsibility;” nor would I have said what I have, were it not that it is in reply to the like sophistries couched in that objection of yours, which I have now been considering.

Another of your charges against the abolitionists is, *that they seek to “stimulate the rage of the people of the free states against the people of the slave states. Advertisements of fugitive slaves and of slaves to be sold are carefully collected and blazoned forth to infuse a spirit of detestation and hatred against one entire and the largest section of the Union.”*

The slaveholders of the South represent slavery as a heaven-born institution—themselves as patriarchs and patterns of benevolence—and their slaves, as their tenderly treated and happy dependents. The abolitionists, on the contrary, think that slavery is from hell—that slaveholders are the worst of robbers—and that their slaves are the wretched victims of unsurpassed cruelties. Now, how do abolitionists propose to settle the points at issue?—by fanciful pictures of the abominations of slavery to countervail the like pictures of its blessedness?—by mere assertions against slavery, to balance mere assertions in its favor? No—but by the perfectly reasonable and fair means of examining slavery in the light of its own code—of judging of the character of the slaveholder in the light of his own conduct—and of arguing the condition of the slave from unequivocal evidences of the light in which the slave himself views it. To this end we publish extracts 43 from the southern slave code, which go to show that slavery subjects its victims to the absolute control of their erring fellow men—that it withholds from them marriage and the Bible—that it classes them with brutes and things—and annihilates the distinctions between mind and matter. To this end we republish in part, or entirely, pamphlets and books, in which southern men exhibit, with their own pens, some of the horrid features of slavery. To this end we also republish such advertisements as you refer to—advertisements in which immortal beings, made in the image of God, and redeemed by a Savior's

blood, and breathed upon by the Holy Spirit, are offered to be sold, at public auction, or sheriff's sale, in connection with cows, and horses, and ploughs: and, sometimes we call special attention to the common fact, that the husband and wife, the parent and infant child, are advertised to be sold together or separately, as shall best suit purchasers. It is to this end also, that we often republish specimens of the other class of advertisements to which you refer. Some of the advertisements of this class identify the fugitive slave by the scars, which the whip, or the manacles and fetters, or the rifle had made on his person. Some of them offer a reward for his head!—and it is to this same end, that we often refer to the ten thousands, who have fled from southern slavery, and the fifty fold that number, who have unsuccessfully attempted to fly from it. How unutterable must be the horrors of the southern prison house, and how strong and undying the inherent love of liberty to induce these wretched fellow beings to brave the perils which cluster so thickly and frightfully around their attempted escape? That love is indeed *undying*. The three hundred and fifty-three South Carolina gentlemen, to whom I have referred, admit, that even “the old negro man, whose head is white with age, raises his thoughts to look through the vista which will terminate his bondage.”

I put it to your candor—can you object to the reasonableness and fairness of these modes, which abolitionists have adopted for establishing the truth on the points at issue between themselves and slaveholders? But, you may say that our republication of your own representations of slavery proceeds from unkind motives, and serves to stir up the “hatred,” and “rage of the people of the free states against the people of the slave states.” If such be an effect of the republication, although not at all responsible for it, we deeply regret it; and, as to our motives, we can only meet the affirmation of their unkindness with a simple denial. Were we, however, to admit the unkindness of our motives, and that we do not always adhere to the apostolic motto, of “speaking the truth in love”—would the admission change the features of slavery, or make it any the less a system of pollution and blood? Is the accused any the less a murderer, because of the improper motives with which his accuser brings forward the conclusive proof of his blood-guiltiness?

We often see, in the speeches and writings of the South, that slaveholders claim as absolute and as rightful a property in their slaves, as in their cattle. Whence then their sensitiveness under our republication of the advertisements, in which they offer to sell their human stock? If the south will republish the advertisements of our property, we will only not be displeased, but will thank her; and any rebukes she may see fit to pour upon us, for offering particular kinds of property, will be very patiently borne, in view of the benefit we shall reap from her copies of our advertisements.

A further charge in your speech is, *that the abolitionists pursue their object “reckless of all consequences, however calamitous they may be;” that they have no horror of a “civil war,” or “a dissolution of the Union;”*

that theirs is "a bloody road," and "their purpose is abolition, universal abolition, peaceably if it can, forcibly if it must."

It is true that, the abolitionists pursue their object, undisturbed by apprehensions of consequences; but it is not true, that they pursue it "reckless of consequences." We believe that they, who unflinchingly press the claims of God's truth, deserve to be considered as far less "reckless of consequences," than they, who, suffering themselves to be thrown into a panic by apprehensions of some mischievous results, local or general, immediate or remote, are guilty of compromising the truth, and substituting corrupt expediency for it. We believe that the consequences of obeying the truth and following God are good—only good—and that too, not only in eternity, but in time also. We believe, that had the confidently anticipated deluge of blood followed the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies, the calamity would have been the consequence, not of abolition, but of resistance to it. The insanity, which has been known to follow the exhibition of the claims of Christianity, is to be charged on the refusal to fall in with those claims, and not on our holy religion.

But, notwithstanding, we deem it our duty and privilege to confine ourselves to the word of the Lord, and to make that word suffice to prevent all fears of consequences; we, nevertheless, employ additional means to dispel the alarms of those, who insist on walking "by sight;" and, in thus accommodating ourselves to their want of faith, we are justified by the example of Him, who, though he said, "blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed," nevertheless permitted 45 an unbelieving disciple, both to see and to touch the prints of the nails and the spear. When dealing with such unbelievers, we do not confine ourselves to the "thus saith the Lord"—to the Divine command, to "let the oppressed go free and break every yoke"—to the fact, that God is an abolitionist: but we also show how contrary to all sound philosophy is the fear, that the slave, on whom have been heaped all imaginable outrages, will, when those outrages are exchanged for justice and mercy, turn and rend his penitent master. When dealing with such unbelievers, we advert to the fact, that the insurrections at the South have been the work of slaves—not one of them of persons discharged from slavery: we show how happy were the fruits of emancipation in St. Domingo: and that the "horrors of St. Domingo," by the parading of which so many have been deterred from espousing our righteous cause, were the result of the attempt to re-establish slavery. When dealing with them, we ask attention to the present peaceful, prosperous, and happy condition of the British West India Islands, which so triumphantly falsifies the predictions, that bankruptcy, violence, bloodshed, and utter ruin would follow the liberation of their slaves. We point these fearful and unbelieving ones to the fact of the very favorable influence of the abolition of slavery on the price of real estate in those islands; to that of the present rapid multiplication of schools and churches in them; to the fact, that since the abolition of slavery, on the first day of August 1834, not a white man in all those islands has been struck down by the arm of a colored man; and then we

ask them whether in view of such facts, they are not prepared to believe, that God connects safety with obedience, and that it is best to “trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding.”

On the subject of “a dissolution of the Union,” I have only to say, that, on the one hand, there is nothing in my judgment, which, under God, would tend so much to preserve our Republic, as the carrying out into all our social, political and religious institutions of its great foundation principle, that “all men are created equal;” and that, on the other hand, the flagrant violation of that principle in the system of slavery, is doing more than all things else to hasten the destruction of the Republic. I am aware, that one of the doctrines of the South is, that “slavery is the corner-stone of the republican edifice.” But, if it be true, that our political institutions harmonize with, and are sustained by slavery, then the sooner we exchange them for others the better. I am aware, that it is said, both at the North and at the South, that it is essential to the preservation of the Union. But, greatly as I love the 46 Union, and much as I would sacrifice for its righteous continuance, I cannot hesitate to say, that if slavery be an indispensable cement, the sooner it is dissolved the better.

I am not displeased, that you call ours “a bloody road”—for this language does not necessarily implicate our motives; but I am greatly surprised that you charge upon us the wicked and murderous “purpose” of a forcible abolition. In reply to this imputation, I need only refer you to the Constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society—to the Declaration of the Convention which framed it—and to our characters, for pledges, that we design no force, and are not likely to stain our souls with the crime of murder. That Constitution says: “This society will never, in any way, countenance the oppressed in vindicating their rights by resorting to physical force.” The Declaration says: “Our principles forbid the doing of evil that good may come, and lead us to reject, and to entreat the oppressed to reject, the use of all carnal weapons for deliverance from bondage. Our measures shall be such only, as the opposition of moral purity to moral corruption—the destruction of error by the potency of truth—the overthrow of prejudice by the power of love—and the abolition of slavery by the spirit of repentance.” As to our characters they are before the world. You would probably look in vain through our ranks for a horse-racer, a gambler, a profane person, a rum-drinker, or a duellist. More than nine-tenths of us deny the rightfulness of offensive, and a large majority, even that of defensive national wars. A still larger majority believe, that deadly weapons should not be used in cases of individual strife. And, if you should ask, “where in the free States are the increasing numbers of men and women, who believe, that the religion of the unresisting ‘Lamb of God’ forbids recourse to such weapons, in all circumstances, either by nations or individuals?”—the answer is, “to a man, to a woman, in the ranks of the abolitionists.” You and others will judge for yourselves, how probable it is, that the persons, whom I have described, will prove worthy of being held up as murderers.

The last of your charges against the abolitionists, which I shall examine, is the following: *Having begun "their operations by professing to employ, only persuasive means," they "have ceased to employ the instruments of reason and persuasion," and "they now propose to substitute the powers of the ballot box;" and "the inevitable tendency of their proceedings is, if these should be found insufficient, to invoke finally the more potent powers of the bayonet."*

If the slaveholders would but let us draw on them for the six or 47 eight thousand dollars, which we expend monthly to sustain our presses and lecturers, they would then know, from an experience too painful to be forgotten, how truthless is your declaration, that we "have ceased to employ the instruments of reason and persuasion."

You and your friends, at first, employed "persuasive means" against "the sub-treasury system." Afterwards, you rallied voters against it. Now, if this fail, will you resort to "the more potent powers of the bayonet?" You promptly and indignantly answer, "No." But, why will you not? Is it because the prominent opposers of that system have more moral worth—more religious horror of blood—than Arthur Tappan, William Jay, and their prominent abolition friends? Were such to be your answer, the public would judge, whether the men of peace and purity, who compose the mass of abolitionists, would be more likely than the Clays and Wises and the great body of the followers of these Congressional leaders to betake themselves from a disappointment at "the ballot-box" to "the more potent powers of the bayonet?"

You say, that we " *now* propose to substitute the powers of the ballot-box," as if it were only of late, that we had proposed to do so. What then means the following language in our Constitution: "The society will also endeavor in a Constitutional way to influence Congress to put an end to the domestic slave-trade, and to abolish slavery in all those portions of our common country, which come under its control—especially in the District of Columbia—and likewise to prevent the extension of it to any State, that may be hereafter admitted to the Union?" What then means the following language in the "Declaration" of the Convention, which framed our Constitution: "We also maintain, that there are at the present time the highest obligations resting upon the people of the Free States to remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed in the Constitution of the United States?" If it be for the first time, that we " *now* propose" "political action." what means it, that anti-slavery presses have, from year to year, called on abolitionists to remember the slave at the polls?

You are deceived on this point; and the rapid growth of our cause has been the occasion of your deception. You suppose, because it is only within the last few months, that you have heard of abolitionists in this country carrying their cause to "the ballot box," that it is only within the last few months that they have done so. But, in point of fact, some of them have done so for several

years. It was not, however, until the last year or two, when the number of abolitionists had become considerable, and their hope of producing an impression on 48 the Elections proportionately strong, that many of them were seen bringing their abolition principles to the "ballot-box." Nor was it until the Elections of the last Autumn, that abolition action at "the ballot-box" had become so extensive, as to apprise the Nation, that it is a principle with abolitionists to "remember" in one place as well as in another—at the polls as well as in the closet—"them that are in bonds." The fact that, at the last State Election, there were three or four hundred abolition votes given in the County in which I reside, is no more real because of its wide spread interest, than the comparatively unheard of fact, that about one hundred such votes were given the year before. By the way, when I hear complaints of abolition action at the "ballot-box," I can hardly refrain from believing, that they are made ironically, When I hear complaints, that the abolitionists of this State rallied, as such, at the last State Election, I cannot easily avoid suspecting, that the purpose of such complaints is the malicious one of reviving in our breasts the truly stinging and shame-filling recollection, that some five-sixths of the voters in our ranks, either openly apostatized from our principles, or took it into their heads, that the better way to vote for the slave and the anti-slavery cause was to vote for their respective political parties. You would be less afraid of the abolitionists, if I should tell you that more than ten thousand of them in this State voted at the last State Election, for candidates for law makers, who were openly in favor of the law of this State, which creates slavery, and of other laws, which countenance and uphold it. And you would owe me for one of your heartiest laughs, were I to tell you, that there are abolitionists-professed abolitionists—yes, actual members of the Anti-Slavery Society—who, carrying out this delusion of helping the slave by helping their "party," say, that they would vote even for a slaveholder, if their party should nominate him. Let me remark, however, that I am happy to be able to inform you, that this delusion—at least in my own State—is fast passing away; and that thousands of the abolitionists, who, in voting last Autumn for Gov. Marcy or Gov. Seward, took the first step in the way, that leads to voting for the slaveholder himself, are now not only refusing to take another step in that inconsistent and wicked way, but are repenting deeply of that, which they have already taken in it.

Much as you dislike, not to say *dread*, abolition action at "the ballot-box," I presume, that I need not spend any time in explaining to you the inconsistency of which an abolitionist is guilty, who votes for an upholder of slavery. A wholesome citizen would not vote for a candidate for a law maker, who is in favor of laws, which authorize 49 gaming-houses or *groggeries*. But, in the eye of one, who has attempted to take the "guage and dimensions" of the hell of slavery, the laws, which authorize slaveholding, far transcend in wickedness, those, which authorize gaming-houses or *groggeries*. You would not vote for a candidate for a law-maker, who is in favor of "the sub-treasury system." But compared with the evil of slavery, what is that of the most pernicious currency scheme ever devised? It is to be "counted as the small dust of the balance." If you would withhold your vote in the case

supposed—how gross in your eyes must be the inconsistency of the abolitionist, who casts his vote on the side of the system of fathomless iniquity!

I have already remarked on “the third” of the “impediments” or “obstacles” to emancipation, which you bring to view. “*The first impediment,*” you say, “*is the utter and absolute want of all power on the part of the General Government to effect the purpose.*”

But because there is this want on the part of the General Government, it does not follow, that it also exists on the part of the States: nor does it follow, that it also exists on the part of the slaveholders themselves. It is a poor plea of your neighbor for continuing to hold his fellow man in slavery, that neither the Federal Government nor the State of Kentucky has power to emancipate them. Such a plea is about as valid, as that of the girl for not having performed the task, which her mistress had assigned to her. “I was tied to the table.” “Who tied you there?” “I tied myself there.”

“*The next obstacle,*” you say, “*in the way of abolition arises out of the fact of the presence in the slave states of three millions of slaves.*”

This is, indeed a formidable “obstacle:” and I admit, that it is as much more difficult for the impenitent slaveholder to surmount it, than it would be if there were but one million of slaves, as it is for the impenitent thief to restore the money he has stolen, than it would be, if the sum were one third as great. But, be not discouraged, dear sir, with this view of the case. Notwithstanding the magnitude of the obstacle, the warmest desires of your heart for the abolition of slavery, may yet be realized. Be thankful, that repentance can avail in every case of iniquity; that it can loosen the grasp of the man-thief, as well as that of the money-thief: of the oppressors of thousands as well as of hundreds:—of “three millions,” as well as of one million.

But, were I to allow, that the obstacle in question, is as great, as you regard it—nevertheless will it not increase with the lapse of years, and become less superable the longer the work of abolition is postponed? I suppose, however, that it is not to be disguised, that, notwithstanding the occasional attempts in the course of your speech to create a different impression, you are in favor of perpetual slavery; and that all you say about “ultra abolitionists” in distinction from “abolitionists,” and about “gradual emancipation,” in distinction from “immediate emancipation,” is said, but to please those, who sincerely make, and are gulled by, such distinctions. I do not forget, that you say, that the abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania was proper. But, most obviously, you say it, to win favor with the anti-slavery portion of the North, and to sustain the world's opinion of your devotion to the cause of universal liberty;—for, having made this small concession to that holy cause—small indeed, since Pennsylvania never at any one time, had five thousand slaves—you, straightway, renew your claims to the confidence of slaveholders, by assuring them, that you are opposed to “any scheme

whatever of emancipation, gradual or immediate," in States where the slave population is extensive;—and, for proof of the sincerity of your declaration, you refer them to the fact of your recent open and effective opposition to the overthrow of slavery in your own State.

The South is opposed to gradual, as well as to immediate emancipation: and, were she, indeed, to enter upon a scheme of gradual emancipation, she would speedily abandon it. The objections to swelling the number of her free colored population, whilst she continued to hold their brethren of the same race in bondage, would be found too real and alarming to justify her perseverance in the scheme. How strange, that men at the North, who think soundly on other subjects, should deduce the feasibility of gradual emancipation in the slave states—in some of which the slaves outnumber the free—from the fact of the like emancipation of the comparative handful of slaves in New York and Pennsylvania!

You say, " It is frequently asked, what will become of the African race among us? Are they forever to remain in bondage? That question was asked more than half a century ago. It has been answered by fifty years of prosperity. "

The wicked man, "spreading himself like the green bay tree," would answer this question, as you have. They, who "walk after their own lusts, saying, where is the promise of his coming—for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation?" would answer it, as you have. They, whose "heart is fully in them to do evil, because sentence against an evil work is not exeedily," would answer it, as you have. But, however you or they and although God may delay his "coming" and the execution 51 of his "sentence," it, nevertheless, remains true, that "it shall be well with them that fear God, but it shall not be well with the wicked."

"Fifty years of prosperity!" On whose testimony do we learn, that the last "fifty years" have been "years of prosperity" to the South?—on the testimony of oppressors or on that of the oppressed?—on that of her two hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders—for this is the sam total of the tyrants, who rule the South and rule this nation—or on that of her two millions and three quarters of bleeding and crashed slaves? It may well be, that those of the South, who "have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton and have nourished their hearts as in a day of slaughter," should speak of "prosperity:" but, before we admit, that the "prosperity," of which they speak, is that of the South, instead of themselves merely, we must turn our weeping eyes to the "laborers, who have reaped down" their oppressors' "fields without wages," and the "cries" of whom "are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth;" and we must also take into the account the tears, and sweat, and groans, and blood, of the millions of similar laborers, whom, during the last "fifty years," death has mercifully

released from Southern bondage. Talks the slaveholder of the “prosperity” of the South? It is but his own “prosperity”—and a “prosperity,” such as the wolf may boast, when gorging on the flock.

You say, that the people of the North would not think it “neighborly and friendly” if “the people of the slave states were to form societies, subsidize presses, make large pecuniary contributions, &c. to burn the beautiful capitals, destroy the productive manufactories, and sink the gallant ships of the northern states.”

Indeed, they would not! But, if you were to go to such pains, and expense for the purpose of relieving our poor, doubling our wealth, and promoting the spiritual interests of both rich and poor—then we should bless you for practising a benevolence towards us, so like that, which abolitionists practise towards you; and then our children, and children's children, would bless your memories, even as your children and children' children will, if southern slavery be peacefully abolished, bless our memories, and lament that their ancestors had been guilty of construing our love into hatred, and our purpose of naught but good into a purpose of unmingled evil.

Near the close of your speech is the remark: “ *I prefer the liberty of my own country to that of any other people.* ”

Another distinguished American statesman uttered the applauded sentiment: “My country—my whole country—and nothing but my 52 country;”—and a scarcely less distinguished countryman of ours commanded the public praise, by saying: “My country right—but my country, right or wrong.” Such are the expressions of *patriotism* —of that idolized compound of selfish and base affections!

Were I writing for the favor, instead of the welfare of my fellowmen, I should praise rather than denounce patriotism. Were I writing in accordance with the maxims of a corrupt world, instead of the truth of Jesus Christ, I should defend and extol, rather than rebuke the doctrine, that we may prefer the interests of one section of the human family to those of another. If patriotism, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, be right, then the Bible is wrong—for that blessed book requires us to love all men, even as we love ourselves. How contrary to its spirit and precepts, that, “Lands intersected by a narrow frith, Abhor each other. Mountains interposed Make enemies of nations, who had else, Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.”

There are many, who consider that the doctrine of loving all our fellow men as ourselves, belongs, to use your words, “to a sublime but impracticable philosophy.” Let them, however, but devoutly ask Him, who enjoins it, to warm and expand their selfish and contracted hearts with its influences; and they will know, by sweet experience, that, under the grace of God, the doctrine is no less “practicable” than “sublime.” Not a few seem to suppose, that he, who has come to regard the whole world as his country, and all mankind as his countrymen, will have less love of home and country than the patriot

has, who makes his own nation, and no other, the cherished object of his affections. But did the Saviour, when on earth, love any individual the less, because the love of His great heart was poured out, in equal tides, over the whole human family? And would He not, even in the eyes of the patriot himself, be stamped with imperfection, were it to appear, that one nation shares less than another in His "loving. kindness"—and that "His tender mercies are (not) over all his works?" Blessed be His holy name, that He has cast down the "middle wall of partition" between the Jew and Gentile!—that there is no respect of persons with Him!—that "Greek" and "Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond" and "free," are equal before Him!

Having said, "*I prefer the liberty of my own country to that of any other people,*" you add—"*and the liberty of my own race to that of any other race.*"

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How perfectly natural, that the one sentiment should follow the other! How perfectly natural, that he who can limit his love by state or national lines, should be also capable of confining it to certain varieties of the human complexion! How perfectly natural, that, he who is guilty of the insane and wicked prejudice against his fellow men, because they happen to be born a dozen, or a hundred, or a thousand miles from the place of his nativity, should foster the no less insane and wicked prejudice against the "skin not colored like his own!" How different is man from God! "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." But were man invested with supreme control, he would not distribute blessings impartially even amongst the "good" and the "just."

You close your speech with advice and an appeal to abolitionists. Are you sure that an appeal, to exert the most winning influence upon our hearts, would not have come from some other source better than from one who, not content with endeavoring to show the pernicious tendency of our principles and measures, freely imputes to us bloody and murderous motives? Are you sure, that you, who ascribe to us designs more diabolical than those of burning "beautiful capitals," and destroying "productive manufactories," and sinking "gallant ships," are our most suitable adviser? We have, however, waved all exception on this score to your appeal and advice, and exposed our minds and hearts to the whole power and influence of your speech. And now we ask, that you, in turn, will hear us. Presuming that you are too generous to refuse the reciprocation, we proceed to call on you to stay your efforts at quenching the world's sympathy for the slave—at arresting the progress of liberal, humane, and Christian sentiments—at upholding slavery against that Almighty arm, which now, "after so long a time," is revealed for its destruction. We urge you to worthier and more hopeful employments. Exert your great powers for the repeal of the matchlessly wicked laws enacted to crush the Saviour's poor. Set a happy and an influential example to your fellow slaveholders, by a righteous treatment of those, whom you unrighteously hold in bondage. Set them this example,

by humbling yourself before God and your assembled slaves, in unfeigned penitence for the deep and measureless wrongs you have done the guiltless victims of your oppression—by paying those *men*, (speak of them, think of them, no longer, as *brutes* and *things*)—by paying these, who are my brother men and your brother men, the “hire” you have so long withheld from them, and “which crieth” to Heaven, because it “is of you kept 54 back”—by breaking the galling yoke from their necks, and letting them “go free.”

Do you shrink from our advice—and say, that obedience to its just requirements would impoverish you? Infinitely better, that you be honestly poor than dishonestly rich. Infinitely better to “do justly,” and be a Lazarus; than to become a Cræsus, by clinging to and accumulating ill-gotten gains. Do you add to the fear of poverty, that of losing your honors—those which are anticipated, as well as those, which already deck your brow? Allow us to assure you, that it will be impossible for you to redeem “Henry Clay, the statesman,” and “Henry Clay, the orator,” or even “Henry Clay, the President of the United States,” from the contempt of a slavery-loathing posterity, otherwise than by coupling with those designations the inexpressibly more honorable distinction of “ Henry Clay, the emancipator. ”

I remain, Your friend, GERRIT SMITH.